

BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION:
WHAT IT IS AND HOW TO DO IT:
A REVIEW OF MARTIN AND
PEAR'S 6TH EDITION

ANTHONY J. CUVO

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

The sixth edition of *Behavior Modification: What It Is and How To Do It*, by Garry Martin and Joseph Pear, has recently been published. The authors' goals for the book are (a) to teach the elementary principles and procedures of behavior modification; (b) to teach practical applications, such as observing and recording behavior, recognizing instances of behavioral principles and their effects on behavior, and designing, implementing, and evaluating behavioral programs; (c) to provide advanced material on the empirical and theoretical foundations of behavior analysis; and (d) to present the material as an easy-to-use handbook for practitioners.

The intended audience primarily includes students taking a course on behavior modification and human services professionals who are concerned with enhancing the behavioral development of individuals. In addition, the authors state that the book may be of interest to those who want to apply behavior modification in their daily lives. The book is written in a manner that assumes no prior knowledge of the subject matter.

The text is subdivided into six parts with 29 chapters. Part I introduces the behavioral orientation of the book and provides an overview of major areas of application, including parenting, education, gerontology, business, sports psychology, people with severe disabilities, and other important contemporary topics. Part II, the largest subdi-

vision of the book with 13 chapters, focuses on basic behavioral principles and procedures. Topics include those typically found in introductory texts: reinforcement, extinction, shaping, discrimination learning, stimulus control, fading, response maintenance, chaining, generalization, punishment, and respondent conditioning. In addition to the expected content on these topics, such as definitions and factors that influence their effectiveness, there are sections on pitfalls of the procedures and guidelines for their effective application. These are very useful sections for students and practitioners. The pitfalls help the student to become a critical consumer of the procedures, and the guidelines provide a list of verbal rules for the application of the procedures.

Part III provides more advanced application of the principles of stimulus control for effective programming. Prior to discussing specific advanced stimulus control topics, the authors set the stage with chapter 22 titled "Planning, Applying, and Evaluating a Treatment Program." This chapter provides decision and implementation rules for whether a behavioral intervention program should be initiated when a referral has been made, and how to select and implement assessment, behavior change, and program evaluation procedures. These important issues for practitioners are not covered in some of this book's competitors. Topics for "putting it all together" in other chapters in Part III are rules, goals, modeling, physical guidance, and contextual variables, termed *situational inducements* by the authors.

Part IV addresses assessing, recording, and

Martin, G., & Pear, J. (1999). *Behavior modification: What it is and how to do it* (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

graphing of data, as well as functional assessment and single-subject designs. These chapters could be read separately, and some instructors may wish to assign them earlier, perhaps after Part I.

Part V turns to how the previous material can be integrated into larger scale treatment programs, such as token economies, self-control strategies, systematic self-desensitization, cognitive behavior modification, and nine areas of clinical behavior therapy. Approximately one page is devoted to each topic of clinical behavior therapy (e.g., anxiety disorders, depression, obesity, habit disorders), enough to inform students of the wide reach of behavior therapy, but too little to develop the topic in a substantive manner.

Also in Part V, the authors provide a brief historical perspective of behavior modification (chap. 28). This topic often occurs in an earlier chapter in introductory books, but the authors believe that readers will better appreciate the contributions of our founders after being exposed to the substantive content of the discipline. As with Part IV, chapter 28 also could be presented earlier. The final chapter is a brief treatment of ethical issues. The chapter includes, among other topics, a behavioral view of ethics and a table listing the Association for Advancement of Behavior Therapy ethical issues for human services. The inclusion of this table is excellent, but it requires further discussion and elaboration for the typical undergraduate class.

At the end of each chapter are study questions and application exercises, as well as notes and extended discussion of chapter content. Some students may want to read past this supplementary material; however, with appropriate course contingencies, it could enhance the students' learning.

The first edition of this book was published in 1978 under the same title, *Behavior Modification*. Although use of the term was beginning to wane in the late 1970s, it is

certainly much more passé as we enter the 21st century. The title certainly catches one's eye, and it drew some unsolicited comments from students and professors who saw the book on my desk. In chapter 28, the authors discuss the terms *behavior modification*, *behavior therapy*, and *applied behavior analysis*. Martin and Pear argue that the latter two terms are subsumed under the rubric *behavior modification*, and this term is the more encompassing characterization of the subject matter. The title, therefore, is based on this conceptualization of the discipline articulated by the authors. It might be useful to make this point in the preface, or even better, in the first chapter, where it is more likely to be read by students.

The book is well organized and written for its intended audience, undergraduates taking a first course on the topic and human services professionals without formal training in behavior modification. The book's content spans behavior therapy and applied behavior analysis; therefore, its topical coverage is broader than that typically found in introductory books on applied behavior analysis alone. Because of its breadth of coverage, the chapters are relatively brief, typically 10 to 15 pages including supplementary material. As with many books, the breadth of coverage is at the expense of the depth of content that each topic addresses. The book is infused with a broad variety of practical applications that should appeal to students with varied interests from numerous disciplines and professions. To supplement the text, there are cartoons, photographs, tables, and figures that enhance the authors' message. The book's tables and figures organize and summarize textual information in a manner that should be helpful to students. Overall, the book is more basic in content than some other popular books used for a first course on behavior analysis.

Because the book is too basic for the graduate course that I teach on behavioral prin-

ciples and procedures, I asked my colleague who teaches an introduction to behavior analysis course to examine the book and consider its utility for her course. Her students are primarily undergraduates in rehabilitation services. It was her opinion that the book's content, writing style, and flexibility are superior to her current text, and she decided to adopt the Martin and Pear book. The book has continuously met the test of the marketplace since its first edition in 1978. I believe that the sixth edition will continue to have its niche in the marketplace, and rightfully so. I believe that the

authors succeeded in achieving their stated goals. I recommend the book as a first text in behavior modification for undergraduates, for service providers without a background on the topic, and for other interested readers who want to learn about the discipline.

REFERENCE

Martin, G., & Pear, J. (1999). *Behavior modification: What it is and how to do it* (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Final Acceptance August 3, 1999
Action Editor, Patrick C. Friman